

PROFIT, PIETY AND THE PROFESSIONS IN LATER MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

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From Caitiff and Villain to Pater Patriae: Reynold Bray and the Profits of Office¹

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Two main themes emerge from a study of the estates of Reynold Bray, chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster (1485–1503), treasurer of England (1486) and sworn councillor of the King (1485–1503). The first is so familiar as almost to be a platitude: the profit of office and power was visible wealth. New riches encouraged investment in land, whence came an increase in profit and diversification in the sources of income, bringing, in turn, yet further acquisitions of real estate. The second theme is of some historiographical significance, and is inherent within the range of sources available to the would-be chronicler of Bray's career. The restrictions imposed by the nature of the record material present a recurrent challenge. The solutions adopted have a relevance and application beyond the subject of Bray alone and an essay on Bray's estates can be read as a study in the uses of evidence. For there are no receivers'-general accounts, no general surveys or valors to list, summarize or value Bray's property; no family tradition or pattern of inheritance within Reynold's immediate history to flesh out the skeleton, to explain the dynamics of the expansion and management of the estates, or to preserve his archive as a coherent collection; no surviving inquisitions *post mortem* to provide a comprehensive and retrospective overview. Despite the interminable length of Bray's will, it, too, is woefully inadequate in the information it provides, and the alienation of parcels of the accumulated lands began almost immediately after Bray's death. The historian must look elsewhere: to the records of the courts at Westminster, and in dark and sometimes unexpected corners for documents held in disparate, but publicly accessible, collections. A secondary theme is the way in which Bray's past and continuing service to Margaret Beaufort (d. 1509) informed and at times assisted the pattern and the process of his acquisitions, the further consolidation of his estates, and his choice of feoffees and estate officers. It has also, coincidentally, preserved for us some of the most intimate records of his activities.

Reynold Bray was already a mature adult, when he first appears as receiver-general of Sir Henry Stafford (son of the first Duke of Buckingham) and his wife, Margaret Beaufort. Bray's father, Richard, and a brother, John, enjoyed lesser offices within the same service.² Reynold is commonly thought to be the eldest son of his father's second marriage.³ His minimal endowment reflects that order of precedence, although neither father nor son seem to have possessed lands in themselves sufficient to support their status as gentlemen. Forty years later Bray's position had altered beyond all recognition. The battle of Bosworth transformed his career. By his death on 5 August 1503 Bray was one of the most influential men in England, one of the most prominent of all Henry VII's councillors, and one of the few with ready access to the person and mind of the King himself. To juxtapose the descriptions of two contemporaries, one a critic, the other an admirer, and both polemical, the 'caitiff and villain of simple birth' had been transformed into 'pater patriae'.⁴ In less than two decades Reynold built up an estate sufficient to qualify his heirs for two peerages, Bray and Sandys. Ten of Edmund Bray's eleven children were female and thus that peerage fell into abeyance in 1557 on the premature death of his son John Lord Bray.⁵ Bray's lands were scattered through eighteen counties at their greatest extent, although there had been some consolidation before Bray's death. Writs for inquisitions *post mortem* issued into eight counties, but not a single return now survives.⁶ Reynold Bray had no heir of his own body to inherit his estates and the eventual settlement did not accurately reflect his wishes.⁷

Before 1485 Bray's salary as receiver-general was probably augmented by the fees of other offices within Henry Stafford's gift. The expenses of his peripatetic life were met largely by his lord. He was a frequent and welcome guest at Henry and Margaret's table, and in their company he dwelled within the household.⁸ His patrimony may have been merely a house and some land in the parish of St John in Bedwardine, Worcestershire, where he was born.⁹ He bought a tenement in Wells, convenient for his periodic visits to Somerset as receiver-general, and added in 1483 the Hampshire manor of Flood.¹⁰ More substantial were his acquisitions by marriage (probably between 1475 and 1478) to the much younger Katherine, daughter and co-heir of Nicholas Hussey, a former victualler of Calais.¹¹ Bray's initial gains are by no means clear, and the full potential of his investment may not have been realized until his own accession to power after 1485. Katherine thus brought him claims to the manors of South Moreton in Berkshire and Freefolk in Hampshire, where, for a night in November 1497, Henry VII was to enjoy Bray's hospitality in the course of their victorious return from Exeter.¹² They may have obtained more immediate entry into other lands. The formal division of Hussey's estates between the co-parceners occurred in 1478, although the

complexity of the arrangements made to define and secure title in the lands that were to pass to Reynold and Katherine suggests that the settlement was not straightforward. Bray and his wife were to have Standen Huse (in Hungerford, Berkshire) and 40 marks of land from the newly dismembered manor of Harting, formerly the *caput* of Nicholas Hussey's lands. The manor, and the bulk of the Sussex estates, passed to Katherine's elder sister, Constance, and her husband, Henry Lovell. Yet despite ambiguous evidence of receipts from Harting in 1475 and, more clearly, the citation of Harting as an alternative *alias* in his pardon of 1484, by 1489 Bray was petitioning John Morton as chancellor that the feoffees appointed in 1478 should give him seisin. Judgement was then swiftly given in his favour.¹³

For twenty years before Bosworth Bray was the trusted servant of Margaret Beaufort and her husbands Henry Stafford and Thomas, Lord Stanley. Stafford's first will reveals him bound in substantial sums on his master's behalf. Margaret was Stafford's sole executrix, but Bray was to play a prominent part in the settlement of her estates and, in Stafford's final will, of 1471, Bray was the sole legatee (appropriately, of a grizzled horse) outside the immediate family.¹⁴ It is unclear when Bray first became armigerous and later tradition assigned to his father the same arms, but it is more likely that they belong to 1485 and Henry VII's coronation, when he was knighted and his arms recorded by the heralds. In his one contemporary portrait, the eagle's foot erased 'a cuise' of the house of Stanley is the most prominent charge on the surcoat depicting his own arms.¹⁵

Bray's part in the revolution of 1485 is well known. He was probably not at ~~Bosworth~~ and may initially have remained with Margaret Beaufort, who assigned him rooms at Coldharbour, the victory gift given her by her son, and now refurbished for her use.¹⁶ But on 13 September 1485 he was appointed chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster for life, with a fee of 100 marks p.a., by mid-October he was acting as under-treasurer in the Exchequer, he was knighted at the coronation, and on 28 February 1486, in an appointment with few precedents for a commoner, he became treasurer of England.¹⁷ Although he held this great office only briefly, lasting only until 10 July, he did so at a politically critical time. Lord Treasurer Bray and his under-treasurer Avery Cornburgh each lent the crown over £1,600 and made assignments to repay over £3,500 advanced largely by the merchant community shortly before they took office. As King's councillor, Bray had earlier himself fronted Henry's urgent request for short term loans to support his infant regime. In later years Reynold's lent from his own resources and a rolling cycle of loan, repayment in cash, and new loan, but in 1486 it seems more probable that he was a front man

for money provided from elsewhere.¹⁸ Even after Lord Dynham became treasurer in July, Bray continued to act closely with him in the Exchequer for the rest of the century. The story of Bray's public career is to be told elsewhere;¹⁹ it is the way in which public office helped him to private profit that concerns us here.

Bray's long service had earned Henry VII's gratitude and laid the foundation of an enduring special relationship. Offices, major and minor, worth well over £130 p.a. even without the treasurership, acknowledged his loyalty, his services and his abilities.²⁰ His patents and knighthood were his reward and a mark of public honour and thanks. He was not granted lands, but patronage, political manipulation and the process of the law combined with a timely and well-targeted opportunism enabled Bray to secure his fortunes by entering the property market.

Bray's first purchase is significant for more than the quality of his investment. The manor of Chelsea he acquired in the summer of 1486 was to form one of the principal endowments for Katherine Bray's widowhood²¹ and was sufficiently attractive for Henry VIII to force an exchange on William Sandys, to whom it had descended, in 1535.²² Behind the ordered language of the writ of right pleaded to secure Bray's title, a complex of forces were at work. In Chelsea, as elsewhere, some may only be deduced or suspected. Of others we have more certain knowledge because Bray, as an experienced searcher for evidence for Margaret Beaufort's disputes, frequently had his own deeds enrolled in Chancery or common pleas, obtained exemplifications of the legal processes which secured his possession, and of copies of documents, public or private, and historical matter pertinent to his title.

The entry on the *De Banco* roll proclaims only the customary legal fictions necessary to convey Chelsea to Bray; a related action placed the vendor's title on record. But the charters enrolled reveal the vendor as Robert Shorditch esquire, whose son George was required to give additional warranty.²³ Is it entirely coincidence that that same Trinity term 1486, also Bray's final term as treasurer, one Robert Shorditch, former clerk of the spicery of Edward IV, was allowed to plead his pardon for a debt of £6 17s 3d on his account?²⁴ An indenture between Reynold and Robert specifically safeguarded Bray against execution for debt and Robert's other land sales suggest financial embarrassment. Even allowing for improvements and additions by Bray, the purchase price was no more than 10–12 times its annual value, well below the common market rate of 18–20 years' purchase.²⁵ As in some other purchases, political pressure is hinted at, for the sale was made, not directly to Bray, but to Elizabeth, Dowager-Duchess of Norfolk. Bray was ultimate beneficiary, the duchess

being reimbursed (or, rather, Robert paid) with 700 marks of the 'goodys of . . . Sir Reynold'. The *eminence grise* behind this extraordinary and obscure arrangement was Margaret Beaufort, at whose 'speciall desire, instance and requeste' the duchess acted. Elizabeth was also induced to sell to Bray an additional house and 40 acres of land, which 'late were Richard Beauchamp, late bishop of Sarisbury' and had, presumably, come to her by inheritance.²⁶ These transactions raise more questions than can easily be answered, but clearly all is not what it seems.

Chelsea also introduces another recurrent theme: Bray's reconstruction of a history, real or supposed, for himself and its concrete expression through a necessarily interrupted title to, and association with, land. Thus we find that Chelsea was held legitimately, but for a finite term, by one John Bray of Chiswick under Richard II. This John held the manor by virtue of a contingent remainder; after his death it passed to William Atwater, mentioned by name in the legal processes of 1486. A deposition by John Shorditch, father of Robert, recording this descent, is now among the archives of Westminster Abbey, a location suggesting that the document was part of the legal brief for Bray's acquisition of Chelsea, and that he was well acquainted with its contents.²⁷ This same awareness of pedigree, status, and self-image perhaps prompted Bray's purchase in 1502 of an interest in East Haddon (Northants.). A connection between it and the name of Bray could be traced to the thirteenth century, in the accessible source known as Kirkby's Quest, and from 1497 Bray quartered (by grant of the heralds) the arms of the ancient, knightly, Northamptonshire family of Bray with his own.²⁸ Quasi-historicism also passes fleetingly through the history of Great Rissington Manor (Glos.) and may explain his purchase in 1498 of land in a county in which he had no other material interest. But land in Great Rissington had been held at the turn of the fourteenth century by Henry Hussey, from whom Katherine was lineally descended, and through whom she was connected, in the cadet line, with the minor baronial family of that name. Its mid-fifteenth-century alienation may have lain within living memory.²⁹ Moreover, it was clearly Reynold Bray's intention that the Hussey inheritance, divided between Katherine and her sister, should be again united through the marriages of Katherine's heirs general, the daughters of her elder sister, to males of his own name and lineage, although their prospects might have commanded a greater match.³⁰ Consistent in spirit were the dubious claims to inheritance pleaded by Bray for South Moreton (Berks.), of which Katherine's great-grandfather had died seised in 1409, and Freefolk in Hampshire. In both cases, despite conflicting evidence offered by puzzled jurors, the courts gave judgement for Bray. In South Moreton there may have been genuine confusion, for Henry Hussey appears to have alienated the manor by way of mortgage. But clients of

Margaret Beaufort who witnessed subsequent charters and enfeoffments could have supplied Bray with pertinent information, and the final stages of the conveyance to Reynold are certainly fictitious, with a supposed default by the Duke of Suffolk on a bond of statute merchant.³¹ Bray's claims to Freefolk were disputed in earnest, but after the case remained unsettled at the Winchester assizes, the defendants seem to have bowed to *force majeure* and reached a compromise which gave Bray possession. An uneasy conscience is suggested by the separation by his will of Freefolk from the main estate in favour of his nephew Richard Andrewes, husband of Elizabeth Rogers, one of the two co-parceners dispossessed in 1487–8.³² Nor were Reynold's heirs entirely free from the taint of the self-made man: Brays of the sixteenth century and beyond concocted an illustrious genealogy for themselves.³³

The second major acquisition of 1486 cemented more personal links. Woking (Surrey) was a favourite house of Margaret Beaufort and thus a principal residence of Bray (also the estate's steward), and was frequently visited by Henry VII before and after his mother gave it to him in 1503.³⁴ Bray had forged enduring ties with its bailiff, John Bigge, and with several burgesses of nearby Guildford, in whose friary his mother was buried.³⁵ Bray was appointed parker of Guildford by Henry VII, without account and with issues, from 5 September 1485, perhaps the occasion of their first post Bosworth-meeting. When the grant was renewed and augmented in October 1486, confirming wages of £18 5s p.a. and adding the keepership of Claygate park, the original letters patent (now lost) were cited with a date of 5 September.³⁶ This background makes the life grant to Bray by Thomas Butler, Earl of Ormond, 28 January 1486, of the manor of Shere, about five miles east of Guildford, a particularly graceful one. Henry's first parliament reversed Ormond's attainder and confirmed his title to the lands of his inheritance including Shere, granted by Edward IV to Lord Audley. Audley's political light was dimmed, but not extinguished, and he sat with Ormond on Henry VII's council. Despite Ormond's new honours, his elevation to the peerage, and his appointment as chamberlain of Elizabeth of York, he may still have felt in need of friends. Diplomacy was necessary to profit immediately from his restoration, while his Irish title left his revenues vulnerable to the continuance of the king's favour.³⁷ Similar insecurity may have moved the restored Ricardian Lord Dynham to grant Horley (Oxon.) to Bray for life.³⁸ Ormond's initial gift, too, was a life tenancy, reserving rights of hunting and hospitality, but in 1495 Bray purchased Shere outright.³⁹ Audley also bid for Bray's friendship with a £10 annuity from Somerset (in practice drawn in part from Audley's Surrey estates) and the life-grant of the lands he had added to Shere manor during his occupation. This grant was confirmed by his son James, who sold Bray these extramanorial lands in 1497, and Henry VII continued the

annuity after James's attainder.⁴⁰ Bray's legal title to the Audley lands in Cranley and Shere was ultimately accepted, for they passed, in time, to Edmund Bray.⁴¹ Reynold continued to improve and expand Shere and drew produce from Claygate for his household at Shere.⁴² And is it without significance that in 1500 Shere church possessed 'a suit of red damask, with greyhounds', when a greyhound was one of the two principal supporters of Henry VII's royal arms?⁴³

Until about 1492 Bray expanded his estates by drawing on his growing wealth, power and royal favour to exploit the political pressures, private ambitions and the instinct for self-preservation of the several parties concerned. The names of Bray's feoffees testify to the continuing strength of his Beaufort connections: ⁴⁴ indeed, he remained Margaret's receiver-general, although increasingly conducting routine by deputy. His wife did not wholly forsake her place in Margaret's household even after joining the queen's.⁴⁵ But it was Henry VII who authorized the single most important addition to Bray's estates, supplying them with a focus that engrossed Bray for the rest of his life.

In July 1486 Henry VII had made Bray steward, receiver and surveyor of the Bedfordshire manors of Eaton, Houghton Regis and Totternhoe, with Ledburn and Mentmore in Buckinghamshire, forfeited by Lord Zouche. Customarily a single administrative unit, they were leased to Bray in June 1488 for life at 100 marks p.a. The timing is significant. The grant confirms Bray's influence and authority at a time when Henry VII was reviewing his moral debts and allegiances, and withdrawing or extending still generous grants of grace in the considered light of judgement and kingly experience. Bray may never have paid the 100 mark farm. In April 1488 he was said to have taken the issues since 1485; the (very defective) receipt rolls record no payments by him; and in 1490 the lease was exchanged for a grant in tail male, at an annual rent of a pair of spurs. This grant included the issues from 21 August 1485. In June 1492, perhaps in view of the French expedition and Bray's childlessness, the grant in tail was amended to Bray, his heirs and assigns, in fee simple.⁴⁶

Bray's acquisition of Eaton demonstrates, perhaps more clearly than any other transaction, the profits, tangible and intangible, to be gained from royal office. The 1486 grant that gave Bray the most senior offices within the Eaton condominium was part of a general distribution of patronage after Bosworth, but it also came only two days after the King warranted a pardon for Lord Zouche (former lord of Eaton) and on the same day that letters were signed and sealed for the transfer of the treasurership to Lord Dynham. Similarly the 1488 lease followed within a month of the commission to Bray and others to let crown lands to farm. It was a

commercial lease based on the full rate of the extent, although only about two-thirds of the true value of the lands, but the rent may never have been exacted and Bray was well placed to secure subsequent grants on ever more favourable terms. Thus far is not extraordinary, and the inferences drawn are based at best on circumstantial evidence. Then follows the agreement of 23 November 1495 between Bray and Zouche. For £1,000 – a purchase price after the rate of fifteen years according to the extent, but in practice little more than Bray's probable receipts of the preceding decade – Lord Zouche, now finally restored in blood and with qualified expectations for the full restoration of his inheritance including Eaton, confirmed Bray's tenure. He conveyed to Bray full title to the Eaton complex 'for asmoche as the seid John Zouche knyght hath by the especiall labour, assistens and meanes of the seid Sir Reynold atteyned the singuler favour and the especiall grace of our . . . Soverayne lord . . . [and has been] restorid to his estate, dignite and preeminence . . .', with restoration also, under conditions, of his lands. As a naked expression of Bray's influence, of the intangible profits of office and power, he could hardly have been more explicit.⁴⁷

Thereafter Eaton stood testimony to conspicuous wealth. Bray built so lavishly there that the receivership of John Cutte (receiver-general of the duchy and, from 1505, under-treasurer of the Exchequer) was continually and substantially overspent. By 1501 Reynold had spent more than £1,800 on the works at Eaton and had large stocks of building material there at his death. He was aided by a gift of stone, at the cost of carriage, from the 'rector of Assherugg' (his old friend Christopher Urswick, dean of Windsor, to whose chapel Bray himself contributed so largely). The stone was probably for dressings, for the accounts suggest that the substance of the house was brick. Eaton might have compared well with Lord Cromwell's Tattershall or with Hanwell, built by William Cope, Henry VII's cofferer, Margaret Beaufort's servant, and Bray's life-long colleague, servant and friend.⁴⁸

Eaton was the most significant land grant from Henry VII to Bray and it is entirely fitting that the parish is now distinguished by the 'feudal addition' of Bray.⁴⁹ Later grants from the King fit either into the logic of expansion of his estates, significant only against the background of the reduced liberality of Henry VII's later years, or depend on the identity of interest of King and councillor and on Bray's major office of chancellor of the duchy. Steane and Hinton in Northamptonshire, in royal hands by the death without heirs in 1489 of Lord Morley, and Ilmington, in Warwickshire, forfeited by Sir Simon Mountford, were granted to Bray in 1495–6. Next year Bray bought out Anthony Fetiplace's substantial annuity in Steane and Hinton and thus realized the full value of lands extended at over £50 p.a. While Ilmington was granted at Bray's petition,

even this, by the addition over an erasure of assigns as well as heirs as a contingent remainder, indicates the symbiotic relationship between King and minister. The altered petition was not rewritten, but in a clerical intervention that was by this date unusual, Henry VII has written 'We allow the rasyng that is in this bill'.⁵⁰ By 1500 Bray was farming Pipehall in Erdington, complementing his own purchase of the other Erdington manor. Both have their origin in the murky dealings of Henry VII with the Countess of Warwick: but the grant of the farm can have come only from the crown.⁵¹

Grants of office continued throughout the 1490s, although the pattern changes. Many administrative tasks and local commissions carried no reward and embodied merely what was expected of a senior councillor. But local office did enhance his patronage, his status and the authority of the King. Thus Bray was regularly appointed to the bench in nine counties, though he sat habitually only in Middlesex and Surrey; the ninth county, Derby, reflects his standing within the Stanley household rather than his landholding, for he held no land in Derbyshire. His name was included in twenty-three of the thirty-one commissions issued in 1493, the major omissions being the marches (dominated by the prince's council) and the counties of the south-west.⁵² Of his land offices, some, such as the stewardships of Grantham, Stamford, Ascot, Deddington and Kenilworth, the parkership of Potterspury, and the forestership of Salcey, were almost certainly granted at Bray's instance, in his own particular interests or that of a friend or protégé with whom he shared the office and the fees.⁵³ Others, more prestigious, were direct placements by the crown, asserting its authority through powers delegated to Bray. Clearly Bray could not exercise all these offices in person, nor could Henry long spare him from his chamber and council. The chancellorship of the duchy also called for frequent attendance in the duchy chamber at Westminster.⁵⁴ Some offices were soon regranted; in others Bray continued to devolve authority further through his use of deputies, while retaining the right to intervene if necessary and unimpaired powers of patronage.⁵⁵

We cannot estimate the value of such offices to Bray. Custody of Carisbrooke was of some military significance, but the farm of the King's lands within the Isle of Wight officially brought Bray little above the improvements he made, for his was at the whole rate of a realistic extent. However, an inquiry in 1504 into the extortions of his deputy and his successor demonstrates the scope for illegitimate enrichment. Although Bray's patent dates only from 1495, by the King's 'speciall commaundement' he had enjoyed office and revenues since 1488, paying the farm directly to the King in his chamber.⁵⁶ In Sutton and Potton Bray received

the whole of his small fee of four marks; whereas in the duchy honours of Tutbury and Bolingbroke his deputies divided the whole of his wages between themselves.⁵⁷ But profit cannot be measured by fees alone. Quite apart from the hidden douceurs that oiled the wheels of society in general, patronage equalled power, and in major offices Bray's own interests were inseparably identified with those of the King, without diminution of his own authority. In general deficiencies in the evidence render it impossible to evaluate precisely the benefit to either Reynold or his royal master. A single instance must serve to illuminate the whole. An anguished letter to Bray from Lancelot Lowther, concerning the balance of authority within the lordships of Bromfield and Yale, and the importance of maintaining tight control over appointments to offices there, well illustrates the unquantifiable benefits which could be derived by master and servant alike.⁵⁸ But office could initiate profit even at the most humble level. For example, John Etton, receiver of Bolingbroke, where Bray was steward, made Bray the supervisor of his will, with five marks 'for his labour'.⁵⁹ Moreover, where the King led, others followed, including the canons of Windsor and of Wells, the Countess of Warwick, the executors of William Trussell, or the University of Oxford, which, in 1494, appointed Bray steward for life.⁶⁰ Annuities and fees were but another expression of the same relationship, honouring the grantee as much as the donor, and bidding for a patronage which ultimately depended on Bray's major offices and standing with the King.⁶¹ Interlinked, but more unpredictable, and at times based on a purely private and personal relationship, were his appointments as overseer or supervisor of wills. Requests to act, such as those made by the London merchants Thomas Windeout and Richard Hill, recall old friendships; Viscount Lisle spoke of Bray with warmth, but also asked for his mediation with the King; such a request, in Lisle's case, or the testamentary appointments of Bray made by Edward Story, Bishop of Chichester, or Thomas Langton, Bishop of Winchester, may well be an extension beyond the grave of the system of retaining by fee in the interests of the grantor. Whatever the origin of such requests, they provided Bray with a steady, if fluctuating, income of both specie and plate.⁶² Spiritual profit enhanced Bray's earthly glories. He was, for example, granted confraternity with the monks of Durham, Canterbury and Westminster, and with the chapter of Lincoln: in the latter case, as a specific 'recompense' for his 'blessed and charitabil disposicion' in a decree made before him in the duchy chamber. Bray shared with Henry VII the benefit of prayers at St Martin in the Fields. After his death he was remembered in perpetual prayer by the wills of both Nicholas Compton and John Cutte, whom he had materially assisted in the advancement of their careers. Office as profit to the soul is most strikingly expressed in the *Magnificat* window at Great Malvern and in Bray's own chantry chapel at

Windsor, but almost his first act as lord of Eaton was to establish a chantry there, and in Bath he cooperated in similar vein with Oliver King (formerly the King's secretary), where the wealth of both and their association with Henry VII gave them access to the finest materials and workmanship and the necessary royal licence.⁶³

Politically his most important casual grant, which Bray can only have accepted with the tacit approval of Henry VII himself, was his pension from the French King after 1492. Bray was treasurer of war and a signatory to the petition advising the King to make peace,⁶⁴ but his pension originates in his most ill-defined capacity, that of councillor to the King. The oft-recited words of the Milanese ambassador of 1497 express this relationship better than any modern pen may do: 'The French . . . [with Henry VII's] knowledge and consent . . . give provision to the leading men of the realm, to wit, the Lord Chamberlain, Master Braiset, Master Lovel, and as these leading satraps are very rich the provision has to be very large'.⁶⁵

The French pension and wages of particular appointments were certainly profits of office. But no less intimately connected were the private investments for which office provided the means and, on occasion, the opportunity.

Senior office holders were well placed to bid for casualties in the King's gift, or for those grants of grace that ran 'of course' in return for the payment of a fee. Bray's two most substantial wardships belong to the early years of the reign. His patent for that of Robert Wintershill has its roots in the household of Margaret Beaufort, and the lands were administered with Bray's manor of Shere.⁶⁶ The wardship of John Writell was shared with the goldsmiths Edmund and John Shaw.⁶⁷ Bray's share of the substantial cost and profit is alike unknown, although John Shaw, whose ties to Bray were extremely close, was to marry his daughter Audrey to the ward. Bray himself came to oversee the finding and sale of the King's wards, and was in a privileged position to bid for himself and his friends.⁶⁸ His relationships with merchants encouraged investment in the shipment of wool and even shipowning. His terms as under-treasurer and treasurer reinforced a commercial dialogue pre-dating 1485. Periodically Bray obtained licences for substantial shipments of wool, and bottom in the King's own great ship, the *Sovereign*; although fragmentary evidence only of his activities now survives.⁶⁹

But it is in relation to the active land market that the methodology adopted here has a wider application, even if here coloured by the opportunities offered to Bray. Without any major corpus of private material, the main source of information is that open to any student of late medieval land ownership: the records of the central courts at Westminster.

These are the *De Banco* rolls, the Feet of Fines, and the close rolls of Chancery, which had become primarily a register for the enrolment of private deeds.⁷⁰ Equity proceedings and 'ancient deeds', speculatively searched, produce useful sidelights. Some ground work is necessary. First, caveats must be applied to the adversarial language of the records. Land was conveyed by means of legal fictions: writs of right *precipe in capite* until about 1487-8; thereafter, for reasons still awaiting investigation, the writ almost universally used was *disseisin in le post*. Both led, by leave of the court, to a legal settlement embodied in the foot of fine. Variations from these formulae tend to indicate a genuine, rather than a collusive, suit. Second, the process is commonly obfuscated by enfeoffments to use.⁷¹ To make progress in interpreting the records, one must first identify the feoffees commonly used by the beneficiary from charter evidence or by observing the repetition of particular groupings of names in the legal records. This is most involved in Shere, where the feoffees sued against Bray himself (as the tenant in possession) and in Barnsbury, where Reynold had seisin as a feoffee of Lord Berners. In the Shere case Bray called Ormond (the true vendor) to warranty, thus effecting the actual transfer of title; in Barnsbury the conveyance was further complicated by a suit for detinue of deeds against Thomas Bourghier. Both times the common law fictions are clarified by charter evidence.⁷² For the biographer of Bray the preliminary identification of feoffees is particularly complex. His earliest feoffees spring from his service to Margaret Beaufort before 1485 and continue sole until about 1488, when their numbers expand and the names change.⁷³ Yet, even though there are only two main groups of feoffees, divided in point of time, their company was not entirely constant and there are unusual features. Contrary to normal usage, the *cestui que use* was seldom given as Bray but instead as William Smith, successively clerk, Bishop of Lichfield, and, from 1495, Bishop of Lincoln. This would not matter if all fines allegedly to the use of Smith were *ipso facto* to the use of Bray: but such is not the case. Smith, like Bray, moved from the service of Margaret Beaufort to Henry VII's, maintaining his dual allegiance all his life, and even the expanded group of feoffees have a common background in Margaret's service. These variables make it difficult, at times, to distinguish when the feoffees were acting for Bray from those to the use of some other party. Fines involving John Shaw, and Margaret herself, are particular instances of a wider problem. We may wonder whether civil power combined with at times civic wealth, but speculation leaves the conundrum unresolved.

Contemporaries as well as historians were confused. Thus Remenham was included in the 1511 division of Bray's estates even though the books of Henry VII's treasurer of the chamber suggests that it was a royal purchase intended as an endowment to Westminster Abbey. This is

supported by the names of the feoffees and by arrangements made by a recognizance designed to secure the transfer of title.⁷⁴ The conveyance of Wandsworth in 1502, although not to Bray's usual feoffees, was specifically said to be to his use. The circumstances suggest a political context or a mortgage, and the title to the manor was subsequently disputed between the Abbot of Westminster and William, Lord Sandys, one of Bray's lineal heirs.⁷⁵ Edmund Bray claimed Drayton in Middlesex, alienated by Reynold to Margaret Beaufort,⁷⁶ and by 1501 she held Boxworth (Cambs.), acquired in 1496 by Bray's usual feoffees afforced only by the attorney Gregory Skipwith, who also acted for Bray at Battlesden the same year.⁷⁷ The evidence for the conveyance in 1494 of Irchester (Northants.) suggests that Bray was to be the beneficiary, but by 1511 William Cope and his wife had seisin. Although the deed of sale signed in May 1490 by Lord Dudley for Shepperton (Middx) identifies Bray as purchaser, the fine was to an augmented group of Bray's feoffees, and the true use and immediate descent is uncertain. By 1505 the manor was held by the goldsmith Bartholomew Reed.⁷⁸

The real problem in listing the lands accumulated by Bray, or by anybody whose estate came by purchase rather than inheritance, is that there are no cross-checks to serve as a controlment to the legal record. An incomplete list appears in the 1510 settlement that divided the inheritance between William Sandys and Edmund Bray consequent to litigation in the council chamber.⁷⁹ It ignores some (but not all) lands acquired before 1497, perhaps partly assigned by the terms of a will of 1497, which is now lost, as is the will made (according to Edmund Bray) in 1500.⁸⁰ Small properties may escape mention altogether. We know of a tenement in Princes Risborough only because a bill of repairs survives in Bray's correspondence: the evidence obtains circumstantial confirmation from the later distraint of Edmund Bray for suit of court.⁸¹ Land in Suffolk is known of primarily because Bray sued in Chancery for seisin; still obscure, they are identified more closely in 1510. Again, from circumstantial evidence, we may guess that Bray's intercession for a mortmain licence formed part of the purchase price.⁸² Parcels of lands added to individual manors might be too small to merit legal proceedings in the Westminster courts. Such purchases are recorded in the manorial accounts for Shere, 1485-93, and in the declared accounts for Eaton 1496-1500, but are otherwise entirely lost.⁸³

Such heavy dependence on the formal record obscures mens' motives for entering the property market. Land was the most cherished and most visible status symbol in fifteenth-century society, and the land market was hedged about with legal restrictions, particularly in relation to inherited lands, yet it flourished in despite. When the sources are restricted, attempts to identify the reasons behind a particular sale rely upon

circumstantial evidence open to a diversity of interpretation. Inevitably the result is compromise. Reynold Bray, with his long experience of the difficulties of conciliar arbitration, would have recognized the historian's dilemma and been the first to acknowledge that judgements based on compromise and subjective interpretation remain open to question and of doubtful longevity. But that bleak assessment need not invalidate the enterprise.

It would be tedious to provide a detailed inventory of Bray's entrepreneurial efforts. Even an abbreviated catalogue presents an awesome level of activity, suggests patterns within the expansion of the estates, and reveals quirks in the evidence. If we leave aside those investments already considered, whether by purchase or crown grant, Bray's speculations in the market in land fall into two main periods. The first, to 1495, is politically inspired. Office provided wealth, opportunity, influence and the subtle leverage to mobilize the due processes of the civil law. That element did not disappear after 1495, but there are more signs of market forces at work, and an activity that was sometimes hectic. No less than nine manors were purchased in 1499, for example, and the same number in 1502, though some were small and insignificant. And in some cases Bray trimmed his sails close, whether in genuine ignorance or in a full knowledge discounted in the arrogance of power, to the limits of legality, driving bargains for an unquiet title that in two cases at least remained to trouble or disinherit his heirs. The end product was an estate, almost all of it acquired by patent or purchase rather than inheritance, stretching along a belt fifteen miles either side of the present M1, from Cottesbrooke (Northants.) in the north through Pavenham and Bedford (Beds.), to Eaton, Ledburn and Mentmore (Beds. and Bucks.) in the south; thence along the Chilterns and the Icknield way, taking Great Milton (Oxon.) as its most westerly point until the line curved in to a group circling (can it be accident?) the queen's manor of Bray (Berks.) and found its epicentre in Windsor, the focus of Bray's last years. Estates were scattered as far west as Somerset; north to Erdington near Birmingham (Warw.); and into East Anglia in the east. There was a large, less coherent, agglomeration in Sussex and the counties of the south, houses in London, and the Surrey lands based on Shere, greatly expanded by the next generation.

Two names stand out from the first period of Bray's purchases. William Berkeley, Earl of Nottingham, Earl Marshal and, from 1489, Marquis of Berkeley, agreed sales and exchanges of land with Bray associated with, and dependent upon, his arrangements he made with Henry VII; nor, indeed, was Bray the only councillor to help pluck this self-proffered sacrificial chicken. Thomas Stillington, 'cousin' and heir of the disgraced

Bishop of Bath, may have had little option but to concur in his own disherison.⁸⁴ Both series of transactions point up the difficulties of dependence on plea roll evidence. We do not know the price or, for certain, the reasons for Nottingham's conveyance to Bray of the Bedfordshire manor of Bromham in mid-1488. Plea rolls are concerned only with the due rendering of proper legal forms, not with the human negotiations concealed by the language of the law. The indenture setting out the terms by which Stotfold and the barony of Bedford were transferred to Bray is enrolled among the charters at the rear of the *De Banco* roll, where the membranes are most vulnerable to damage. It is a fascinating and exceptionally detailed document. But water or the delicate palates of some eighteenth-century rodents have nosed out some of the most essential phrases, expunging them from the record and thus from the memory of man.⁸⁵ The parties to whom Thomas Stillington in 1491 conveyed Great Stambridge in Essex include the attorney John Berdefeld and the merchant Henry Colet in addition to Bray's usual feoffees. The true descent was to elude identification by more than one puzzled jury as well as the modern historian. The manor fitted ill within any geographical logic in Bray's estates. By 1504 it was in the possession of the London goldsmith, John Shaw, a feoffee and executor of Bray. The inquisition *post mortem* on Shaw records Bray as the vendor.⁸⁶

When we find that the deeds for the sale of lands in Kensington and for the manor of Haynes (Beds.) were acknowledged by Berkeley in Chancery on the same day as other deeds by which Henry VII allowed him to secure property for the performance of his will, we need hardly doubt that the events were connected, particularly as the King licenced the alienation to Bray. Two terms later Bromham was added and in 1489 Mawneys (Essex), which was almost immediately exchanged, with the payment of a differential of 400 marks, for the manor of Stotfold and the more prestigious barony of Bedford: all the lands and the castle, that is, but not the title of baron nor the advowsons of abbeys, priories and nunneries thereunto appertaining.⁸⁷ Haynes and Bedford came encumbered with fees; but in Haynes Bray bought off part of his obligation, while the annuities charged on Bedford were unlikely to deter his continued interest. They were to the lawyer, John Mordaunt, a member of Bray's own estate council and his successor as chancellor of the duchy; to the king's solicitor, Andrew Dymmock, and the king's attorney, James Hobart; and to the rising lawyer and king's serjeant, John Fisher.⁸⁸ Not surprisingly in 1492 Bray sought and secured confirmation of his title from Berkeley's right heirs, Thomas, Earl of Surrey, now slowly working himself back to favour, and Maurice Berkeley, who was to suffer severely by his disinheritance. Indeed, in 1499 Maurice Berkeley, the marquise's brother, resold Mawneys to Bray at a time when he and Surrey sought from Henry

livery of the Cokesay inheritance; and in July 1502 Berkeley was sufficiently desperate, or perhaps merely sufficiently perspicacious, to confirm Edmund Dudley in the reversion of the manor of Findon (purchased by Dudley from Richard Guildford, who had obtained it from the marquis) in return for a promise 'to be of his counsell in all such causes and materes as the seid lord shall have a doo consernyng the lernyng of the seid Edmund without fee or reward to be had . . . but only at the plesour of the seid lord'.⁸⁹

In Stillington's case it is perhaps not too fanciful to see Reynold Bray, Richard Fox and Robert Sherborne as the fiscal gaolers of his errant kinsman. They were identified as administrators of the bishop's possessions by juries responding to writs issued for multure and Bray's eventual discharge by the Exchequer does not prove this to be untrue.⁹⁰ Within a month of the bishop's death, 15 May 1491, Thomas had sold Bray the manors of Great Stambridge (Essex) and Marylebone (Middx.) at approximately two-thirds of the market value. Stambridge was subsequently alienated, but in 1496 Marylebone was leased to Thomas Hobson, Lady Margaret's auditor, for 20 marks p.a., and sold to him in 1499.⁹¹ In 1492 Stillington sold Bray yet other lands, in Paddington and elsewhere in Middlesex, at a still more favourable rate. It may have been an arbitration award by Chief Justice Hussey and others that prompted Stillington and another claimant Robert Cotton to make over their title to Bray, who alienated the lands to Margaret Beaufort as part of her intended endowment to the King's chantry at Westminster. The degree of compulsion emerges in 1493, when Bray pursued Stillington to the point of outlawry on a debt of 515 marks.⁹²

After 1494 the simple correlation between office, profit and wealth and opportunity, investment and land breaks down. Bray's income now came from many sources other than office. Estate expansion acquired its own momentum, as he bought or sold lands, or added small parcels to manors retained in hand. He bought where he could, from those in debt or without heirs, as well as the politically indigent. Bray's own focus shifted towards Windsor: he clearly welcomed the chance to buy and consolidate the fractured manor of Clewer (within the modern boundary of the town) in a series of conveyances that may have been in the interests of all the parties concerned.⁹³

Bray's acquisitions read like a sonorous roll call of the English countryside. Most were 'made sure' by concords reached in the court of common pleas. By 1499 Reynold Bray stood at the height of his powers. He remained exceptionally close to the King, particularly as a president of the nascent council learned in the law, an intimate and increasingly

influential manifestation of the King's council. The political element remained and indeed the council learned gave Bray a further power base for his own enrichment, available for use without derogation to the interests of the King.⁹⁴

In 1494 Bray purchased from the childless Henry Lord Grey of Codnor the Northamptonshire manors of Newbottle and Charlton, in a complex series of conveyances intended to secure his title without further interruption.⁹⁵ Drayton (Middx) required concords with various parties over three years to secure Bray's title; and the conveyance of Irchester (Northants) was probably to Bray's immediate use.⁹⁶ In 1495 Bray assured his title to Eaton; obtained from Robert Wright, the manor of Erdington (Warw.), and, from the King, Steane and Hinton; although the preservation at Westminster of an account for Erdington 1492-3 with liveries to an unnamed lord may indicate an earlier transfer of title.⁹⁷ In 1496, besides Ilmington, he bought lands in Medmenham (Bucks.) and the small manor of Knyll in Tarring (Sussex); secured from the senior branch of the Hussey family recognition of his title to Standen Hussey and lands in Harting; and exchanged lands with Thomas Oxenbridge, thereby acquiring Battlesden (Beds.), a useful staging post between the Eaton manors and those lands centred on the town of Bedford. The exchange appears to revise an indenture of the previous year and may thus be connected with the heavy recognizance for allegiance in which Oxenbridge was bound in 1495. It hints at continuing legal difficulties over parcels of the Hussey inheritance. Later additions to Battlesden enable us to see Bray's own estate council at work and to see how his privileged position enabled him to employ duchy officers in his own private service.⁹⁸

In 1498 he bought Cottesbrooke manor (Northants.) and lands in Bedfordshire from John Markham, taking collateral security on two Lincolnshire manors; at the same time Markham was also selling land to Lord Daubeney, and Humphrey Banaster. Is this the same Markham who, little more than a year later, was indicted for murder in the King's books, 'which is of greate substans as Sir R. Bray can tell'?⁹⁹ As lord of Cottesbrooke, Bray became founder of Pipewell Abbey and he sought from King Henry the franchises of free warren and frankpledge within the manor.¹⁰⁰ 1499 was his *annus mirabilis*. His most important purchase was a valuable group of lands centred on Windsor, which brought him the manors of Clewer, Brocas, Buntingbury, Dedworth Maunsell and Foxley rated, in 1546, at over £85 p.a. The purchase was exceptionally complex. In November 1499 Bray brought from the childless William Brocas the manors and lands of which Brocas was the *caput* and gained immediate possession by buying out the life tenants. Clewer and Foxley were a tangle of legal rights, complicated by the involvement of Charles Rippon, a household man whose political future was now uncertain. The taint of

treason and a riot involving him and John Preston (vendor of Remenham) suggests he was not a willing partner. His interests were protected in the short term and Rippon was allowed a lease in the small manor of Foxley, an inducement to sell used by Bray on at least one other occasion. Suits against William Skulle and John Rykes can be explained as buying out co-parcenors, although Rykes, like Rippon, was involved in the miasma of treason around Edmund de la Pole, for which both were indicted in 1502 and for which Rippon suffered the ultimate penalty. For the aged and childless Thomas Danvers sale of his rights may have been a part of the pre-testamentary division of his estates.¹⁰¹ Deeper undercurrents run also beneath the re-purchase of Mawneys.¹⁰²

Edgcote (Northants.) is superficially uncontroversial, although the names John and James Clarell suggest a link with Margaret Beaufort and of Thomas Hasilwood with Richard Empson. Combined with the alleged earlier exclusion of a rightful heir, it may be that Bray bought out a disputed title as part of a generally acceptable settlement. In May 1498 Henry VII himself advanced Bray money for building works there.¹⁰³ This payment and Henry VII's visit of 16 September 1498 point up a problem that we meet writ large with both Great Milton (Oxon.) and Broadwater (Sussex). In all three the formal legal process post-dates Bray's occupation. Great Milton and Broadwater were purchased from Sir William Radmyld, who retained a life interest by a prior agreement in 1497 with John Shaw, to whom the manors were to revert. Yet even the final concord of 1503 fails to give unambiguous evidence that Great Milton belonged to Bray and a deed acknowledged in 1499 in king's bench by Radmyld's widow (daughter of Elizabeth Duchess of Norfolk) suggests a joint use, whereas a court roll shows Bray's tenure dating from at least April 1499 and the rental was renewed at his first court. Broadwater, where he first bought land in 1496, followed a similar descent, but may not have come to Bray until late 1501 or early 1502.¹⁰⁴ Hinton Pipard (Wilts. and Berks.) reasserts the Windsor connection. It cost Bray four days meat and drink to the vendor and the mayor of Windsor besides the purchase price.¹⁰⁵ The conveyance of Great Rissington (Glos.) and the purchase of the advowson of St Leonard's Hospital in Bedford (to which Bray immediately presented Hugh Oldham) complete a frenetic year.¹⁰⁶

In 1500 Bray acquired a manor in Weston Turville (Bucks.), part of the Cokesay inheritance; another part, Coldicote in Gloucestershire, was simultaneously purchased from the same parties by Richard Empson.¹⁰⁷ Westhay (Beds.) came, like Bedford Hospital, ultimately from the impecunious Thomas Bassingbourn. In Husborne Crawley we again encounter an uncertain use. A feoffment of 1499 was said to be to the use of Humphrey Coningsby, a senior lawyer who was a Bray feoffee; yet charters of 1500 and 1501 specifically name Bray and it was certainly he

whom the Exchequer sued for distraint of homage. The manor was assigned in 1510 to Edmund Bray.¹⁰⁸

Two purchases show more clearly the darker side of office-holding. Late in 1500 Bray purchased the Somerset manor of Eastham. But after his death one of his feoffees, William Cope, King's cofferer, claimed it, alleging that Bray had bought only an annuity and that he, Cope, had purchased the manor itself from John Hayes, when Hayes, suspected of treason, was in his custody and for whom he had sued to the King for pardon. Eastham, by this account, fell to Cope as part payment of the 500 marks required by the King to buy his grace. Although Hayes's title may itself have been doubtful, there are other parallels to Cope's story, and the inquisition *post mortem* returned after Cope's death agrees with his version of events. The wrangle over title survived both Cope and Bray, and was unresolved more than thirty years into the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁹ Even more explicit is the background to Bray's acquisition in 1502 of the small manor of East Haddon in Northamptonshire by processes which reflect credit on none of the parties concerned. When Edmund Bray was sued for it in the court of requests, the father of the original vendor alleged the false augmentation of the terms of the deed of sale and that the style of manor was 'colorably' put into the fine. The depositions further charge that Reynold obtained the manor only by virtue of 'hys myte, power and grette extorte'. The council found against Edmund Bray in 1521.¹¹⁰

In 1501-2 minor parcels of land were added to the house of Bray's birth. Bray never lost interest in his Worcestershire lands, infinitesimally small in value though they were. His sister Lucy had oversight of the lands and literary evidence shows how far his might eased his purchase and deterred possible rivals.¹¹¹

His last two years show no let up in his expansionist mood. New acquisitions include the eponymous manor of Bernersbury (Barnsbury, Middx.) acquired from Lord Berners, a Stafford client, and Kempston Daubeney, acquired in a tripartite exchange shortly after the return of a commission of concealments relating to the manor.¹¹² Boveney and Dorney (Bucks.) and Cruchfield (Berks.) were acquired from John Wayte, a surety with Charles Rippon in 1498 for further conveyance of Remenham.¹¹³ If the evidence of stained glass no longer extant be allowed, Burnham and West Town (Bucks.) were more than a passing fancy, and in Pavenham he bought out both the reversioner and the tenant in possession.¹¹⁴ Thirteen other conveyances transferred title to Bray for lands in five counties, in addition to the indenture concerning Wandsworth and a process involving Thomas Lucy, of which the details are now lost.¹¹⁵ Again, we may speculate, was the purchase of Charlton in

Hopgras dependent on the purchase by the vendor, John Isbury, of a licence for alienation in mortmain from Henry VII?

The most important acquisition cannot be dated with precision. Broadwater and its attendant manors may have yielded £90 p.a. It came, like Great Milton, from William Radmyld. Albourne, Beverington and Lancing were exchanged, with other lands, for Kempston Daubeney. In Broadwater itself we have a glimpse of Bray as parochial seigneur, giving rabbits for the patronal feast of the parish church, engaging in remedial building works, looking for the best tenants; and, most interestingly, though we cannot be certain whether Bray or Shaw was the moving spirit, searching in public and private records for evidence of ancient rights.¹¹⁶ It may also instance a rare clash of interests with Henry VII. Rather than alienate his own estates to Westminster, Henry assigned over £30,000 to buy land. Bray's exchange with Bergavenny was certainly a hollow sham, for Bergavenny was required to assign his share to Westminster. Only two weeks before his death, Bray and his feoffees obtained a mortmain licence including Broadwater and, more obviously, Remenham: yet his will specifically devised the Radmyld lands to his nephews, rather than to the corporate good of the Tudor soul.¹¹⁷

In this hurricane of activity, much of it in the last four years of Bray's life, it is understandably difficult to draw up a definitive list of his estates. Both the manner and the rapidity of their accumulation left tensions unresolved at his death. Although lacking heirs of his own body, he clearly felt a strong sense of dynasty. Not only did he will the bulk of his estates to the sons of his brother John, but he also provided for their marriages. The eldest, Edmund, may have married in Bray's lifetime according to the terms of an agreement made in 1497 with Sir John Norbury. Edmund was to take the lion's share (or so Bray intended) of the purchased lands. More interestingly, Edmund's younger brothers were to marry the heirs general of his wife: the daughters and heirs of Katherine's sister Constance and her husband Henry Lovell. They were given a remainder right in the purchased lands, but were to take all the Hussey inheritance, plus the valuable manors of Chelsea and Broadwater, with remainder each to each 'as long as any of the same heirs males of my name and bloode shall endure'. To this end Reynold purchased from Henry VII the far from valuable wardship of Agnes and Elizabeth Lovell. But although Bray paid Henry at least £140 as the whole, or the final portion, of the purchase price, and the warrant was duly signed by the King and delivered into the Chancery, death intervened before the fees of the hanaper were paid, or the patent enrolled.¹¹⁸

Death broke the bonds of office and obligation and Henry VII proved ruthless in the aftermath. He resumed the wardship, selling it to Edmund Dudley on the excuse that Bray's grant had been found 'insufficient and

voide in the lawe' and then recommended disingenuously to Dudley that he should resell the wardship to Bray's executors 'to thentent that the said mynde and last will of the said Sir Reynold may be performed and take effect afre his said entent'. Although Bray's feoffees indeed repurchased the wardship, transferring to Dudley the manors of Newbottle and Charlton at a loss to fund the 1,000 marks purchase price, Bray's mind was never fully performed. By 1509 Agnes was married to John, son of Richard Empson, one of the feoffees, and Elizabeth to Anthony, son of Andrew Windsor, Dudley's first brother-in-law.¹¹⁹ William Sandys may have taken advantage of the minority of John Bray's sons to press for a share of Reynold's estate rather than the reversionary interest allowed him by the will. Edmund lost part of his portion to Sandys, but, in 1510, divided with him those lands destined for his brothers.¹²⁰ The King himself, in Dudley's words, so managed matters that 'the executors of Mr Bray were hardlie dealt with at dyvers tymes'.¹²¹ They not only lost the wardship, but were fined £800 for alleged commercial misdealing by Bray and paid an even larger fine, of 5,000 marks, for a general pardon.¹²²

Reynold's death at a time of royal celebration leaves no immediate trace in the records. But although the bond of office was now broken, and Henry VII in his turn creamed off the profits, the King did not quite forget his deeper obligation. It is there in general terms in his will, when he acknowledged his gratitude to all those who had made him King. More profoundly and more personally and after any direct obligation had ceased, he expressed it in 1507 in a payment for a trental of masses for Katherine Bray's soul.¹²³

Just how rich was Reynold Bray, and how much profit did he derive from office? The question is not one which can be satisfactorily answered, primarily for the reasons outlined in the introduction to this paper. We cannot even place a value on the wages of office. Fees for major offices are generally specified in the patent, but for lesser grants the patent often refers only to the accustomed wages. We are thus dependent on the uncertain survival of detailed evidence, complicated in the case of Bray by the numerous occasions on which the patent incorporated a joint grant. We cannot hope to quantify the hidden benefits, or trace the full extent of the commonwealth of interest which lead others to follow Henry VII's example and retain Bray by office or by fee. *The Great Chronicle* offers a revealing backhanded compliment in its epitaph of Bray:

which by his lyfe lyvid not withowth much haterede and many an unkeynd and untrew report of many of the kyngys subgettys . . . [but he] . . . dyd bettyr than he wold make countenance ffor, and

therewith reffucid gyfftyes of valu and took oonly mete or drynk, and where he took, the gyver was suyr of a ffreend and a speciall solicytour of theyr matyer.¹²⁴

Fear and detestation is no less a measure of influence.¹²⁵

When we look at Bray's lands we cannot apply a simple multiplier to their purchase price (even where known) to derive an annual value. Dugdale, who cites no evidence, asserts that the post-1497 purchases alone were worth more than 1,000 marks a year; McFarlane, with typical thoroughness, totalled more than £5,400 for bargains whose entry on the close rolls (to 1500) made mention also of the purchase price.¹²⁶ Between 1485 and 1503 Bray spent over £10,000 on buying land. Over this, other lands, acquired by inheritance, purchase or gift, were worth in excess of £420 p.a. Of others again (although much the lesser part) we know neither the value nor the purchase price. Nor can a multiplier be applied to Katherine Bray's dowerlands, for they were considerably less than a one-third share. There may be good reason for this. Reynold and Katherine had an equal interest in seeing the conditions of his will fulfilled. His nephews were to be married to her nieces, and, in name at least, unite the Hussey lands. Both took an interest in Jesus College, where Katherine's munificence outstripped his, and, in their prestigious building works at Windsor. If Bray willed lands worth 40 marks for the maintenance of perpetual alms in the chapel, Katherine matched this interest with equal pragmatism, leaving goods 'as nede shall requyre' primarily to the repair of the highway at Eton and 'the ordynaunce of house of eseament' for the canons: a bequest founded, no doubt, on Bray's assignment to her of half his plate.¹²⁷ There are more precise pointers. Bray customarily paid the whole purchase price of land within a very short period of the signing of indentures for its sale. He offered the greatest contribution of any layman other than Margaret Beaufort herself to the benevolence of 1491. Although Bray's £500 is nearly matched by £400 from Thomas Lovell (treasurer of the chamber and chancellor of the Exchequer), and a similar amount from Lord Treasurer Dynham, such offerings contrast with £68 paid at days by Lord Willoughby de Broke, the king's steward of household, or the £40 proffered by Richard Empson, attorney of the duchy.¹²⁸ Besides Eaton, Bray was building at Newbottle and Edgcote, and our evidence is woefully incomplete. His public benefactions, too, were munificent. He funded works on a massive scale at Windsor, and seems to have shared in the costs of building at Malvern, Bath and Jesus College, besides lesser works.¹²⁹ After Bray's death Henry VII demanded the enormous sum of 5,000 marks for a pardon. What is immediately significant is that the executors called the King's bluff, and more than half this fine had been paid by February 1505. A further 1,200 marks obtained their discharge from prosecution for alleged customs

offences: Henry required collateral security of lands worth £290 p.a. for the payment, but forgave them 400 marks of the principal.¹³⁰ Office, we may reasonably conclude, brought Bray wealth as its most visible outward profit.

Despite this undoubted success story, we are, perhaps, left to wonder why the rewards were not even greater. Bray had built up a landed estate easily sufficient to support a title, yet remained a commoner. In 1501 he was admitted into the exclusive ranks of the knights of the Garter, though we may speculate on the pedigree of his election.¹³¹ He kept estate in London, and peers paid him court, but he did not join their ranks. The answer may not lie simply in Henry's parsimony with honour and the *Great Chronicle* may offer us a clue. For all Henry VII's chequered upbringing and colourless reputation, he was sensitive to occasion and to the nuances of the cursus of honour. Bray, we are told, was 'playn and rowth in spech'.¹³² The inventory of his goods (although too defective to be good evidence) gives no hint of cultured or chivalric interests, but he was not untouched by learning. If a chantry priest was recommended to him primarily for his ability to cast accounts, Bray patronized both Pembroke and Jesus colleges; Hugh Oldham and William Smith were among his friends; John Colet, son of his old friend Henry, was to be his wife's executor; and Thomas Linacre attended his deathbed.¹³³ There is a similar ambiguity in his war record. Despite the large contingent he took to France, his indenture deleted the duty of personal service, and Bray travelled there in a primarily civilian capacity; he went to Exeter in 1497 as much a councillor as man of war; but the bloody battle of Blackheath saw him win his banner and augmentation of his arms.¹³⁴ Treasurers of England in general commanded a peerage, spiritual or lay, but Bray held office for less than five months. It was he and the King who enhanced the always prestigious chancellorship of the duchy. Bray's younger and more martial heirs met a youthful and more warlike King. William Sandys was raised to the peerage in 1523; Edmund Bray, a younger man, in 1529. But Henry VIII was yet his father's son. When William Sandys expended his wealth in the King's service (and in speculation in ex-monastic property) and died in debt to the crown, Henry VIII prised the Clewer complex, inherited from Bray, from Thomas Lord Sandys in part settlement of the debt.¹³⁵

But for Reynold Bray himself, the profits of office have their lasting monument. He lies beneath his chantry at Windsor. Above him, his badge of the hemp brake, carved in stone, and round about the heavy symbolism of the monarchy and house of Beaufort, whom he had served so well. Thus ossified and in sculpted form, Bray's profits of office are remembered into the twentieth century.¹³⁶

The Lands of Reynold Bray

	COUNTY	ACQUIRED	BRAY/ SANDYS	SOLD
Haynes	Beds	1487	B	1564/80
Eaton Bray		1488/90	B	1623
Totternhoe		1488/90	B	
Houghton Regis		1488/90	B	1566
Bromham		1488	B	1565
Bedford		1490	B	1569
Stotfold		1490	B	1547
Battlesden		1496	B	1556
Hinwick		1498	B	1566
Husborne Crawley		1499	B	1566
Westhey (in Higham Gobion)		1500	B	by 1559
St Leonards, Bedford (advowson)		1499	B	
Pavenham		1502-3	B	by 1594
Kempston Daubeney		1503	B	1569
North Standen (Standen House)	Berks	1478	B	1533
South Moreton		1488	B	c. 1556
Brocas (in Clewer)		1499	S	1546
Buntingbury (in Winkfield)		1499	S	1546
Dedworth Maunsell		1499	S	1546
Clewer		1499	S	1546
Foxley (in Bray)		1499	S	1639
Cruchfield (in Bray)		1502	S	1577
Haywards (in Sonning)		1502	S	1609
Remenham		1503	S	1612
Buckhurst				1577-8
Ledburn	Bucks	1488/90	B	
Mentmore		1488/90	B	1563
Great Marlowe (land)		1494	B	
Medmenham		1496	B	1537
Weston Turville		1500	B	1529
Boveney		1502	B	1529
Dorney		1502	B	by 1529
Burnham		1502	B	1529
West Town in Burnham		1502	B	1529

	COUNTY	ACQUIRED	BRAY/ SANDYS	SOLD
Boxworth <i>alias</i> Overhall	Cambs	1496	—	by 1501
Great Stambridge	Essex	1491	—	by 1503
Mawneys (in Romford)		1489 1499	— B	1490 by 1523
Great Rissington	Glos	1498	S	1571
Queen Hoo (in Tewin)	Herts	1502	S	1536
Chelsea	Middx	1486	S	1535
Kensington <i>alias</i> Nottingbarons		1488	B	1519
Shepperton		1490	—	by 1503
Marylebone		1491	—	1499
Paddington, etc. (land)		1492	—	1501
West Drayton		1494-6	—	1501
Barnsbury		1502	S	1540
Tyburn		1503	—	1503
Newbottle	Nhants	1494	—	1505
Charlton		1494	—	1505
Irchester		1494	—	by 1511
Steane		1495	S	1551
Hinton		1495	S	1551
Edgcote		c. 1498		1535
Cottesbrooke		1498		1549
East Haddon		1502	B	1521?
Horley	Oxon	?	life tenancy	
Great Milton		1499	B	1539
Kidlington (land)		1497-99		
Eastham (in Crewkerne)	Som	1500	B	1532
Flood	Suth	1483	S	1612
Freefolk		1488	—	1503

	COUNTY	ACQUIRED	BRAY/ SANDYS	SOLD
Carisbrooke and Isle of Wight		1488	life tenancy	
St Mary's, Bury (land)	Suff	1497	B	
Claygate	Surrey	1486	life tenancy	
Shere		1486/95	B	—
Wandsworth		1502	S	disputed
Harting	Sussex	c. 1478	B	by 1520
'Derndale'		?1478	—	1496
West Tarring		1496		
Broadwater		1501/2	S	1605?
Albourne		1501/2	—	1503/4
Beverington		1501/2	—	1503/4
Lancing		1501/2		1503/4
Erdington	Warw	1495	B	1530
Ilmington		1496	S	1550
Hinton Pipard	Wilts	1499	S	1606
Hopgras (in Hungerford)	Wilts (now Berks)	1501	S	1606
St John in Bedwardine (land)	Worcs	?	B	1501-2

Some small parcels of land have been omitted.

Notes

1. This article has incurred many debts: to the staffs of the archives cited, but particularly to Christine Reynolds and the late Nicholas McMichael of the Westminster Abbey Muniment Room; to those of the Public Record Office; to the late Prof. Charles Ross; to Dr Carole Rawcliffe, Dr Rowena Archer and Dr Michael Hicks who read, criticized, and supplied additional material for earlier versions. Without the unflagging encouragement of Dr Hicks it would not have seen the light of day, and I owe him especial thanks.
2. WAM 5472 ff.20v, 29, 31 *et seq*; WAM 12181 f.28v.
3. O. Barron, 'The Brays of Shere', *The Ancestor*, vi (1903), pp. 2-3; T. Habington, *Survey of Worcestershire*, J. Amplett (ed.), (Worcs. Hist. Soc. 2 vols 1895-9), ii. p. 130.
4. A.F. Pollard, *The Reign of Henry VII from Contemporary Sources* (3 vols, 1913-14), i. p. 153; *The Anglica Historia of Polydore Vergil*, D. Hay (ed.), (CS 3rd ser. 1950), p. 133.

5. W. Dugdale, *The Baronage of England* (2 vols 1676), ii. pp. 303–4, 311; GEC ii. pp. 287–9; BL MS Add 32482 A 24 (brass of Jane Halliwell).
6. CFR 1485–1509, No. 755.
7. Below, pp. 156–7; for the later history of the title, see Barron, 'Brays of Shere', pp. 6, 8–9; GEC ii. p. 286.
8. WAM 5472, WAM 12181–12190, *passim*; WAM 5479**; WAM 5472* f.2.
9. 'Brays of Shere', pp. 2–3; *Leland's Itinerary in England and Wales*, L. Toulmin-Smith (ed.), (5 vols 1964), v. 229; given circumstantial support by WAM 5472 f.41v, WAM 16026, 16051; SC 6/Hen VII/1843. Bray's father leased the manor of Laughern, within the parish: information which I owe to Mr. G. Baugh.
10. WAM 5472 f.27; SC 6/Hen VII/1843; CP 25(1)/207/35 No. 1.
11. GEC vii. p. 11. The outside dates are provided by Bray's account books, which record in 1475 receipts from Harting and a loan to his then or future brother-in-law, and by the 1478 division of the estates: WAM 5479**B; below, n. 13.
12. E 101/414/14 f.8; below p. 142.
13. WAM 5479** B; C 237/53/168; C 1/84/20.
14. PROB 11/5 ff.34–34v; SJC D56.186.
15. The portrait, c. 1500, is little more than a clothes hanger for his arms; and is in the Magnificent window of Great Malvern Priory; see also *Two Tudor Books of Arms*, J. Foster (ed.), (1914), pp. 226, 237. BL MS Add 5833 f.67v reports 'somewhat different' arms from Great Milton and Burnham, without further description: they are likely to be the arms in the post-1497 version. For 1485, see *A Book of Knights Banneret, etc.*, W.C. Metcalfe (ed.), (1885), p. 12.
16. M.M. Condon, 'Bosworth Field: a Footnote to a Controversy', *The Ricardian*, vii (1987), p. 364; Metcalfe, *Knights*, pp. 9–12; goods at Blackfriars and Coldharbour in 1503, E 154/2/10 ff.4–6.
17. R. Somerville, *History of the Duchy of Lancaster*, i (1953), p. 392; DL 28/6/1A f.7; J.C. Sainty, *Officers of the Exchequer* (List and Index Society suppl.ser. 1983), p. 199; E 36/125 f.7; M.M. Condon, 'An Anachronism with Intent? Henry VII's Council Ordinance of 1491/2', *Kings and Nobles in the Later Middle Ages*, R.A. Griffiths and J.W. Sherborne (eds), (Gloucester 1986), p. 234. Despite Sainty loc.cit., the *Handbook of British Chronology*, E.B. Fryde and others (eds), (1986), p. 107, is incorrect, and omits also Henry VII's first treasurer Archbishop Rotherham, E 405/75 mm. 1–3.
18. E 401/955, 959; GC 240; cf. *Materials* ii. pp. 158–9.
19. *The Letters of Sir Reynold Bray*, M.M. Condon and D.J. Guth (eds), (in preparation).
20. See CPR 1485–94, pp. 54, 59, 64, 114, 127, 139, 145; Somerville, i. p. 593; E 159/265 recorda Mich rot. 23. Not all fees have been traced and summed and Eaton, where Bray's actual income may have been out of all proportion to his fees, is a particular problem, see below, p. 144.
21. SC 6/Hen VII/1843.
22. *Survey of London: The Parish of Chelsea*, W.H. Godfrey (ed.), i. p. 72; T. Faulkner, *Historical and Topographical Description of Chelsea and its Environs* (2 vols 1829), i. pp. 308–11.
23. CP 40/897 rot.355, 359; *ibid.* rot.cart. rot.1–1d; BL Add Ch 70849.
24. E 368/259 recorda Trin. rot. 9–9d, citing pardon of 7 March.
25. CP 40/897 rot.cart. rot.1d; SC 6/Hen VII/1843; CP 25(1)/152/100 Nos. 17, 48, 51.
26. CP 40/897 rot.cart. rot.1d.
27. WAM 16355; CP 40/897 rot.359.
28. Below, p. 155; G. Baker, *History and Antiquities of the County of Northampton* (2 vols 1822–30), ii. p. 162; J. Bridges, *History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire* (2 vols Oxford, 1791), i. p. 504; *Feudal Aids* iv. p. 8 (from E 164/17); Metcalfe, *Knights*, p. 27; BL Seal CLXVIII.106 : cf. DL 25/2288; BL MS Harl 6157 f.4; WAM MS 43, an antiphoner associated with Reynold, also shows both quarterings of Bray. For Bray's 'historical' searches, see below, p. 155.

29. CP 25(1)79/97, Nos. 41, 42; E 136/79/12; GEC vii. pp. 4–11; VCH Gloucestershire vi. p. 100.
30. Below, p. 156.
31. C 137/71/17; E 383/395 Oxon and Berks; CP 40/903 rot.360d, *ibid.* rot.cart. rot. 1; E 210/5967–70, 5529, 5593; CP 40/773 rot.415; *ibid.* rot.cart. rot.1; see also below, p. 000.
32. CP 40/902 rot.154–154d; CP 40/906 rot.454; E 199/17/1; E 383/380 Suth; E 383/386 Suth; PROB 11/13 f.219v; CIPM Henry VII. iii. No. 626.
33. Barron, 'Brays of Shere', p. 2; *Visitation of Bedfordshire*, F.A. Blaydon (ed.), (Harleian Soc. xix, 1884), p. 162; BL MS Add 5833 f.67v; BL MS Harl 6157 f.4.
34. WAM 5472, 12181–90, *passim*; C 237/53/168; M.M. Condon, *Itinerary of Henry VII* (in preparation); *History of the King's Works*, H. Colvin and others, (eds), iv (1982), pp. 344–5.
35. WAM 12190 f.76; WAM 16056; PROB 11/14 f.134; CPR 1485–94, p. 128; E 159/265, recorda Mich. rot.23; WAM 32350; PROB 11/13 f.219.
36. CPR 1485–1494, pp. 139, 145; *Materials for a History of the Reign of Henry VII*, W. Campbell (ed.), (2 vols RS 1877), i. p. 61; E 159/263 brevia directa Mich. rot.11; GMR 85/6/40 m.1d. In the confusion of 1485 a patent of 5 September is not impossible, if unlikely; that of 25 September 1485 is not enrolled.
37. GMR 85/22/4; GMR 85/13/96; CAD iii. C 3273; CPR 1467–77, pp. 22, 68; RP vi. pp. 296–7; E 136/214/1; *Materials*, i. pp. 229, 295; *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, E. Curtis (ed.), (6 vols Dublin 1932), iii. pp. 279–80, 285–7, 319.
38. CIPM Henry VII, ii, No. 434. The date of the grant is unknown.
39. CP 40/933 rot.262–262d; CP 25(1)/232/78, Nos. 44–46; cf VCH Surrey iii. p. 114.
40. SC 11/828, 829, 832; SC 12/18/50; E 101/413/2/3, 56; GMR 85/6/1 m.1; GMR 85/6/40; GMR 85/13/99; CP 25(1)/232/78 No. 56.
41. GMR 85/13/146; CP 25(1)/232/78 No. 56.
42. GMR 85/6/1; GMR 85/6/18; GMR 85/6/40; CP 25(1)/232/78 Nos. 65, 73; above, n.36.
43. *The Book of Reckonings and other Memoranda 1500–1612 of the Church of St James, Shere*, E.R. Hougham (ed.), (1978), p. 1.
44. William Smith, William Hody, William Cope, and Hugh Oldham passed from Margaret's service to the King's; Nicholas Compton was one of Bray's deputies as receiver-general; Humphrey Coningsby her councillor; and John Shaw her favoured goldsmith; WAM 12190 ff.93v–98; WAM 32355; WAM 31795; WAM 32364; SC 6/Hen VII/1238; SJC MS D91.17, pp. 3, 9, 26–7, 65, 67; M.G. Underwood, 'Politics and Piety in the Household of Margaret Beaufort', *JEH* xxxviii (1987), pp. 43–5; and below, n.73.
45. WAM 32364, 32390, 32355; SJC MS D91.17 pp. 37–8, 61, 63; SJC MS D91.20 ff.17, 25; SJC MS D102.9. f.183; *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, N.H. Nicolas (ed.), (1880), *passim*.
46. CPR 1485–94, pp. 114, 231, 315, 380; CIPM Henry VII iii, Nos. 871–2; RP vi. pp. 275–8; E 159/267, brevia directa Hil. rot.10; for a perceptive general comment, see M.A. Hicks, 'Attainder, Resumption and Coercion, 1461–1529', *Parliamentary History* iii (1984), p. 19.
47. PSO 2/3, 10, 12 July 1 Hen. VII; CPR 1485–1494, p. 230; Hicks, 'Attainder', pp. 19–25; J.R. Lander, 'Attainder and Forfeiture, 1453–1509', *Crown and Nobility 1450–1509* (1976), p. 145; CP 40/935 rot.239–239d; C 54/356 m.13d; Bedfordshire CRO BS/1; above, n.45.
48. WAM 3387; WAM 9219 A–D; E 154/2/10, f.10; M. Howard, *The Early Tudor Country House* (1987), pp. 22, 213. See also M.K. Jones, 'Collyweston – An Early Tudor Palace', *England in the Fifteenth Century*, D. Williams (ed.), (Woodbridge 1987), pp. 130–132; below, p. 158.
49. *Place Name Soc. Beds*, p. 121.
50. CPR 1485–94, p. 307; CPR 1494–1509, pp. 57, 73; CCR 1485–1500, No. 993;

- C 82/157, 1 Dec.; RP vi. pp. 503–6; CIPM Henry VII, iii, No. 993.
51. CCR 1485–1500, No. 912; *Warwickshire Feet of Fines, 1345–1509*, L. Drucker (ed.), (Dugdale Soc. xviii, 1943), pp. 207–8; surrender by copy of court roll: photograph in Warwicks CRO, for which I am indebted to M. Farr. See also M.A. Hicks, 'Descent, Partition and Extinction: The "Warwick Inheritance"', *BIHR* lii. pp. 125–6; 'The Beauchamp Trust 1439–87', *BIHR* liv. pp. 135–49; *Ministers' Accounts of the Warwickshire Estates of the Duke of Clarence 1479–80*, R.H. Hilton (ed.), (Dugdale Soc. xxi, 1952), pp. x–xi. I am indebted to Dr Hicks for help with this point.
 52. M.M. Condon, 'Ruling Elites in the Reign of Henry VII', *Patronage, Pedigree and Power in Later Medieval England*, C.D. Ross (ed.), (Gloucester 1979), pp. 124–5, 131–2; E 314/49; E 36/130 f.134v; CPR 1485–94, CPR 1494–1509, *passim*.
 53. CPR 1485–94, pp. 382, 450, 470; CPR 1494–1509, pp. 22, 39; Somerville, i. pp. 561, 631, 636–7.
 54. Condon, 'Ruling Elites', p. 116; DL 37/62 m.37d, paraphrased in Somerville, i. p. 524.
 55. Somerville, i. p. 541; M.K. Jones, 'Lady Margaret Beaufort, the Royal Council, and an Early Fenland Drainage Scheme', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology* xxi (1986), p. 14; DL 29/264/4141; DL 29/404/6482; DL 29/404/6483; see also Somerville, i. p. 266: removal of an unsatisfactory deputy.
 56. CPR 1494–1509, p. 22; VCH Hampshire v. p. 223; E 368/269 recorda Hil. rot.4–5; E 159/272 brevia directa Hil. rot.1; E 101/413/2/2, ff.14, 26, 36, 41v; SC 6/Hen VII/669; BLMS Harley Roll A 38 (I owe this reference to Dr M.A. Hicks); E 163/28/13.
 57. DL 29/404/6483; DL 29/264/4141; DL 29/262/4142; DL 29/343/5567.
 58. WAM 16031; perhaps the best and most relevant study of the variable equations between profit, influence and local office is *Letters and Accounts of William Brereton of Malpas*, E.W. Ives (ed.), (Lancs. and Chesh. Rec. Soc., cxvi, 1976), pp. 15–33; see also R.A. Griffiths, 'Public and Private Bureaucracies in England and Wales in the Fifteenth Century', *TRHS* 5th ser. (1980), pp. 109–30.
 59. PROB 11/13 f.195.
 60. BROU i. p. 251; SC 6/Hen VII/1373; WAM 9216; *The Manuscripts of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle*, J.N. Dalton (ed.), (Windsor 1957), p. 95; H.E. Reynolds, *Wells Cathedral* (Leeds n.d.), pp. 203–4.
 61. Condon, 'Ruling Elites', p. 123; C. Rawcliffe, 'Baronial Councils in the Later Middle Ages', *Patronage, Pedigree and Power*, pp. 101–2; C. Rawcliffe and S. Flower, 'English Noblemen and Their Advisers: Consultation and Collaboration in the Later Middle Ages', *Journal of British Studies* xxv (1986), p. 159.
 62. PROB 11/12 ff.29, 75v, 114; WAM 11/9 f.100; PROB 11/13 f.181.
 63. WAM 16080; WAM 16025; WAM 13119; PROB 11/14 f.134; PROB 11/20 f.88; J. Armitage Robinson, 'Correspondence of Bishop Oliver King and Sir Reginald Bray', *Proc. Som. Arch. & Nat. Hist. Soc.* lx (1914), pp. 1–4; E 210/9904; Condon and Guth, *Bray Letters*.
 64. Condon, 'Anachronism', pp. 230, 242–3.
 65. CSPM i. p. 335.
 66. CPR 1485–94, p. 228; GMR 85/6/40; GMR 85/6/18; WAM 12190 ff.83v, 90.
 67. CPR 1485–94, p. 98, 268; E 401/957, 18 Feb; PROB 11/14 f.99.
 68. This is a theme which I hope to develop elsewhere.
 69. CPR 1494–1509, p. 81; C 76/175 m.18; C 76/177 m.10; E 122/142/11 ff.27v–29; E 122/142/12 m.8; E 101/415/3 ff.6, 14v, 24v; E 101/690/4; Condon, 'Ruling Elites', p. 128.
 70. Henry VII Close Roll Calendars need checking against the originals: cf. the trenchant and entirely justifiable criticisms of K.B. McFarlane in *EHR* lxxiv (1959), pp. 114–5. On the legal records, A.M.B. Simpson, *Introduction to the History of the Land Law* (Oxford 1961), pp. 112–31.
 71. On which, J.M.W. Bean, *Decline of English Feudalism* (Manchester 1968), pp. 104–5; Simpson, *Land Law*, pp. 27–43.

72. CP 40/962 rot.414; CCR 1500–1509, No. 217; CP 25(1)/152/101 No. 83; C 1/257/42; above, n.39.
73. William Hody and Thomas Rogers, Margaret Beaufort's auditor, until c. 1488: above n.44 and WAM 12188 f.88v; to the names in n.44 add Richard Empson, attorney of the duchy, and John Cutte, duchy receiver-general and Bray's receiver at Eaton. The London merchant Henry Colet is the most frequent 'occasional' addition. The list is compiled from the plea roll refs. cited throughout this paper.
74. CP 25(1)294/83 Nos. 33–5, 39; CP 40/948 rot.381d; CP 40/962 rot.516; E 36/123 p. 93; E 210/5023; E 101/414/16 f.49; CCR 1485–1500, Nos. 577–8; CPR 1494–1509, pp. 304–5, 310.
75. E 40/3987; O. Manning and W. Bray, *History and Antiquities of Surrey* (3 vols 1804–14), iii. pp. 350–1; cf. a mortgage to Bray by Elizabeth Tanfield, CIPM Henry VII, iii, No. 1002.
76. C 1/279/45; CP 25(1)152/100 Nos. 42, 50; WAM 4695 ff.5–5v, 22–23, 24–25v; deed in the former Middlesex RO Acc. 446/ED1. Drayton was intended for Margaret's endowment to Westminster, Middx. RO Acc. 446/M.26.
77. CCR 1485–1500, No. 905; CP 40/937 rot.294d; CP 40/938 rot.cart. rot.2; CP 25(1)30/101 No. 30; PROB 11/13 f.116v; CCR 1500–1509, No. 147; below, p. 153.
78. CP 40/928 rot.349; cf. CP 25(2)/31/211 No. 13; CP 40/913 rot.150d, 356d; *ibid*, rot. cart. rot.1–1d; CP 25(1)294/79 Nos. 22, 49; CCR 1485–1500, No. 85; PROB 11/14 f.322v : the account in VCH Middlesex iii. p. 5 is oversimplified. An indenture of 1495 transfers seisin to feoffees undoubtedly his.
79. C 54/378 No. 30; see also GMR 85/13/149.
80. C 1/279/45; C 54/378 No. 30.
81. WAM 16077; SC 2/212/15.
82. C 1/187/88; cf. CP 25(1)/72/293 No. 54; CP 40/939 rot.cart. rot.2; C 54/378 No. 30; CPR 1494–1509, p. 84.
83. GMR 85/6/1; GMR 85/6/18; GMR 85/6/40; WAM 3387; WAM 9219; cf. CP 40/940 rot.113, recorded by way of a plea of debt.
84. GEC ii. pp. 133–135; below, p. 152; *Lives of the Berkeleys*, by John Smythe, J. Maclean (ed.), (2 vols 1883), ii. pp. 128–32, 136, 148–9; M.K. Jones, 'Sir William Stanley of Holt: Politics and Family Allegiance in the Late Fifteenth Century', *Welsh History Review* xiv (1988), p. 12. On the bishop, see R.J. Knecht, 'The Episcopate and the Wars of the Roses', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal* vi (1957–8), pp. 128–9; *Epistolae Acadamiae Oxonienses*, H. Anstey (ed.), (2 vols Oxford Hist. Soc. 1898), ii. pp. 513–22; CCR 1485–1500 No. 123.
85. CP 40/905 rot.450; CP 40/914 rot.cart. rot.1.
86. CCR 1485–1500 Nos. 552, 567, 758 (originals in E 326/12179, E 328/111); CIPM Henry VII ii. No. 679; CP 25(1)/72/293 No. 60; SC 6/Hen VIII/6878; E 111/1; E 159/284 recorda Trin. rot.39; C 1/76/33, 124.
87. CCR 1485–1500 Nos. 293, 294; CPR 1485–94, p. 200; CP 40/903 rot.352; CP 40/904 rot.356d; CP 40/905 rot.450; CP 40/910 rot.549; CP 40/914 rot.81, 151d; CP 40/915 rot.cart. rot.2.
88. CP 40/905 rot.cart. rot.1; above, n.84.
89. CP 25(1)/6/83 Nos. 13, 14; CP 25(1)/72/294 No. 123; GEC ii, p. 135; CP 40/962 rot.cart. rot.5; E 101/414/16 ff.110v, 256; WAM 9194; WAM 9195; for Berkeley's law suits, *Lives of the Berkeleys*, ii. pp. 154–72.
90. E 202/183, 187, 192, London & Middx, Som & Dors; E 159/274 recorda Easter rot.4d; WAM 16067. Fox and Sherborne, however, required the King's pardon before they, in turn, could be discharged: CPR 1494–1509, pp. 309, 366; E 159/280 recorda Trin. rot.14.
91. Above, n.86; E 326/12163; *Formulare Anglicanum*, T. Madox (ed.), (1702), pp. 213–4, 287–8 (from originals E 327/358, E 328/111); see also C 1/108/51.

92. CP 25(1)152/100 No. 40; WAM 4695 ff. 10–16, 22–27; WAM 4700; WAM 16181–2; Middx. RO Acc 446/ED1; SJC MS D91.20 f.30; plea in Middlesex against Thomas Stillington of Acaster Selby, CP 40/925 rot.168: the plea may, of course, be directly related to the land sales.
93. Below, pp. 153–4.
94. Condon, 'Ruling Elites', pp. 131–4; on the crucial importance of 1497, I. Arthursen, *1497: The Fulcrum of a Reign* (forthcoming); see also McFarlane, loc.cit., p. 114; G.R. Elton, 'Henry VII, Rapacity and Remorse', *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government* (2 vols Cambridge 1974), i. pp. 58–61.
95. C 54/355 m.19A dorset; the abstract in CCR 1485–1500 No. 842 is misleading; CP 40/929 rot.356.
96. CP 40/928 rot.349, 350; WAM 4695 ff.1–4.
97. Above, n.51; WAM 622; cf. WAM 655.
98. Above, pp. 145–6; A.H. Plaisted, *The Manor and Parish Records of Medmenham* (1925), pp. 73, 370–6; CP 40/935 rot.301d, 306; CP 40/936 rot.cart. rot.1–1d; CP 25(1)/6/83 No. 30; CP 25(1)/6/84 No. 40; WAM 16035; CP 40/939 rot.306; CP 40/946 rot.cart. rot.1; C 255/8/4 Nos. 15, 22.
99. CCR 1485–1500 Nos. 1101, 1117; CP 40/946 rot.494d (bowdlerized at rot.491); CP 40/947 rot.310, 347, 349d, 378d; *ibid.* rot.cart. rot.2d, 3; CP 25(1)/294/80/76; other parcels were later added, CP25(1)/179/98 No. 74; E 101/415/3 f.288.
100. WAM 16041; CPR 1494–1509, p. 214.
101. CCR 1485–1500 Nos. 1094, 1119, 1195; E 326/12184–5; CP 40/949 rot.114d, 364, 402; *ibid.* rot.cart. rot.3; CP 40/950, rot.315d, 316d; *ibid.* rot.cart. rot.4; CP 40/951 rot.cart. rot.3; CP 25(1)/13/88 Nos. 31, 33–6; PROB 11/13 f.93v; Bodl. MS DD Brocas C/21; SC 11/63; LR 2/187 ff.33–49; BL Add Ch 6272; KB 27/969 rex rot.5; KB 29/134 rot.5; W.E. Hampton, 'The White Rose under the First Tudors', *The Ricardian* vii (1987), pp. 464–6.
102. Above, p. 151.
103. CP 25(1)/179/98 No. 58; CP 40/947 rot.cart. rot.1d; E 101/414/16 f.28; cf. E 154/2/10 f.10; Condon, *Itinerary*; C 1/110/138; Baker, *Northampton* i. pp. 492–3; CCR 1485–1500 No. 611.
104. CCR 1485–1500, No. 994; *Abstract of Feet of Fines relating to the County of Sussex from 1 Edward II to 24 Henry VII*, L.F. Salzman (ed.), (Sussex Rec. Soc. xxiii 1916), pp. 293, 299; WAM 1631; WAM 1596; WAM 9217; KB 27/958 rot.39d; CP 40/946 rot.cart. rot.1; below, p. 156; see also CP 40/921 rot.cart. rot.1–1d.
105. CP 40/950 rot.317; CP 25(1)/294/80 No. 80; CP 25(1)/257/66 No. 36; WAM 16078.
106. Above, p. 141; CP 40/948, rot.384; rot.cart. rot.1; CP 40/947 rot.315d; rot.cart. rot.1; Lincolnshire Archive Office Episcopal Reg. XXIII ff.389–389v.
107. CP 25(1)/22/128 Nos. 51, 65; CP 40/952 rot.115, 107d; VCH *Buckinghamshire* ii. p. 368; CCR 1500–1509 No. 60; E 101/415/3 f.186.
108. CP 40/953 rot.230; CP 40/954 rot.cart. rot.1; CP 40/956, rot.cart. rot.1; C 54/378 No. 30; E 368/277 brevia directa Hil. rot.1.; CP 25(1)/6/83 No. 29; CCR 1500–1509 No. 75.
109. CAD vi, C 5745, C 4651; C 146/10846; CP 25(1)/202/42 no.29; STAC 2/6/34–45; C 1/279/46–9; C 1/391/57; C 1/612/22–23; C 142/28/29; the deeds are likely to have been exhibits in court. Cf. VCH *Somerset* iv. pp. 12–13.
110. CP 40/962 rot.313; REQ 1/104 ff.130–132v; REQ 2/13/51; REQ 2/12/178; cf. Baker, *Northampton*, i. pp. 162–3 and above, p. 141.
111. CP 40/957 rot.104d; CP 40/958 rot.518; CP 40/956 rot.311d; CP 25(1)/260/29 No. 18; CP 25(1)/260/29 No. 20; CP 26(1)/30 Trin.16 Hen VII; WAM 16026.
112. CP 40/961 rot.360; CCR 1500–1509 No. 201; E 101/546/18; E 159/280 recorda Mich rot.4; KB 27/963 rex rot.10.
113. CP 40/959 rot.116, 106d; CP 25(1)/22/128 No. 70; E 210/5023; above, p. 154.

114. CP 40/960 rot.304, 252d; CP 25(1)/128/60–62, 64, 67; BL MS Add 5833 f.67v; CP 25(1)/294/83 No. 42; CP 25(1)/6/84 No. 45; CCR 1500–1509, No. 165.
115. CP 40/959 rot.110, 120 (bowdlerized 113d); CP 40/960 rot.253d, 278d; CP 40/961 rot.415; CP 40/962 rot.517d; CP 40/963 rot.456d; CP 40/964 rot.263d, 305, 412; CP 40/965 rot.107d, 410; CCR 1500–1509 Nos. 100, 144, 166, 233, 278; E 101/415/3 f.285v.
116. Above, p. 141; WAM 4023; WAM 4029; WAM 5469; WAM 16033–4; PROB 11/11 f.258v; CCR 1500–1509 No. 201.
117. BL MS Add 59899 ff.7v, 28; CPR 1494–1509, pp. 304, 350–1, 374–9; WAM 4551, 4019, 4046.
118. E 101/413/2/3, p. 63; C 82/245, 28 June; E 101/219/4 (no entry); CIPM *Henry VII* ii, No. 645, iii, No. 1141; PROB 11/13 ff.219–20; CCR 1500–1509 No. 196; cf. CCR 1485–1500 No. 1017; E 326/8096–8105.
119. Kent Archives Office MS U455/T138; E 383/485, Surrey & Sussex; CPR 1494–1509, p. 612; BL Add MS 38133 ff.95–95v; cf. CIPM *Henry VII* iii, No. 1141. Dudley resold the manors almost immediately at a profit.
120. PROB 11/13 ff.219–220; C 54/378 No. 30.
121. C.J. Harrison, 'The Petition of Edmund Dudley', *EHR* lxxxvii (1972), p. 88.
122. BL Add MS 59899 ff.157, 182; Condon, 'Ruling Elites', p. 128.
123. E 36/214 p. 230; Stoneyhurst College MS 60 f.1v.
124. GC pp. 325–6.
125. Elton, 'Rapacity and Remorse', pp. 60–1; *Plumpton Correspondence*, T. Stapleton (ed.), (CS iv, 1839), pp. 177–8.
126. Dugdale, *Baronage* ii. p. 303; McFarlane, *EHR* lxxiv. p. 114.
127. PROB 11/13 ff.219–20; PROB 11/15 ff.256v–257; SC 6/Hen VII/1843; A. Gray and F. Brittain, *A History of Jesus College, Cambridge* (2nd edn 1979), pp. 27–32; W. St John Hope, *Windsor Castle: An Architectural History* (2 vols 1913), ii. pp. 450–58.
128. E 36/285, ff.8–9.
129. Above, n.127; WAM 12175; WAM 4023; WAM 16069; WAM 16077; E 154/2/10 ff.8–10.
130. BL Add MS 59899 ff.157, 182; E 36/214 pp. 441, 474–5; Condon 'Ruling Elites', p. 128.
131. The evidence is deficient: but only Gilbert Talbot spoke for Bray in 1499. Yet two years later, this 'principal benefactor' of the college was a gartered knight; and by his death had even obtained papal confirmation of the college's privileges: *Register of the Order of the Garter* (2 vols 1724), i. pp. 239–43; entry of obit in August calendar, 'Notice of a Sarum Breviary in the possession of John Eliot Hodgkin', *Miscellanea of the Philobiblon Society* ix (1865–6): I owe this to Dr N. Ramsay.
132. GC p. 325.
133. Above, p. 158; BROU i. pp. 462–4; ii. pp. 1147–9. 1396–7; iii. 1721–2; WAM 16035; E 154/2/10; Stoneyhurst MS 60 f.104v.
134. Condon, 'Anachronism', p. 230; Condon and Guth, *Bray Letters*; Metcalfe, *Knights*, p. 27; BL Add MS 46354 f.98v.
135. SC 11/63.
136. St John Hope, *Windsor Castle*, ii. pp. 450–8; S. Anglo, 'Henry VII's Dynastic Hieroglyphs', *The Historian* x (1986), pp. 3–8. The precise location of Bray's tomb is unknown; and his badges are found in both aisles and transepts, as well as his chantry – 175 times, by one count: M. Bond, *The Romance of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle* (14th edn Windsor 1987), 22. He would, however, perhaps have appreciated the irony by which his chantry has been appropriated for the chapel shop, the profits of which contribute to the fabric fund: a truly 'perpetual alms'.